

Flood Warning System Upgraded

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The flood warning system for the Delaware River and some of its feeder streams is being upgraded, a move aimed at reducing flood losses in future years.

Since April of 2001, the following flood warning improvements have either been completed or funded:

- Full basin coverage by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather radio except for local terrain interference.
- Satellite and telephone telemetry upgrades at 12 stream, precipitation and lake level gauges.
- Reactivation of eight stream gauges.
- Installation of four new stream gauges and one precipitation gauge.
- Establishment of a Community Flood Alert

Telephone System for the Lower Neshaminy Creek in Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

- Addition of National Weather Service test products from the Advanced Hydrologic Prediction Services (AHPS) utilizing Doppler radar and probabilistic forecasting.

Although the bulk of the funding is from federal and state programs, local and private sources also have contributed.

Serious flooding occurred in the Delaware River Watershed during 2001. Damage estimated at \$35 million resulted from flood waters spawned by Tropical Storm Allison in June. Seven people lost their lives.

Despite programs to acquire flood-prone property, most flood plains in the Delaware River Basin are still highly developed. Flood

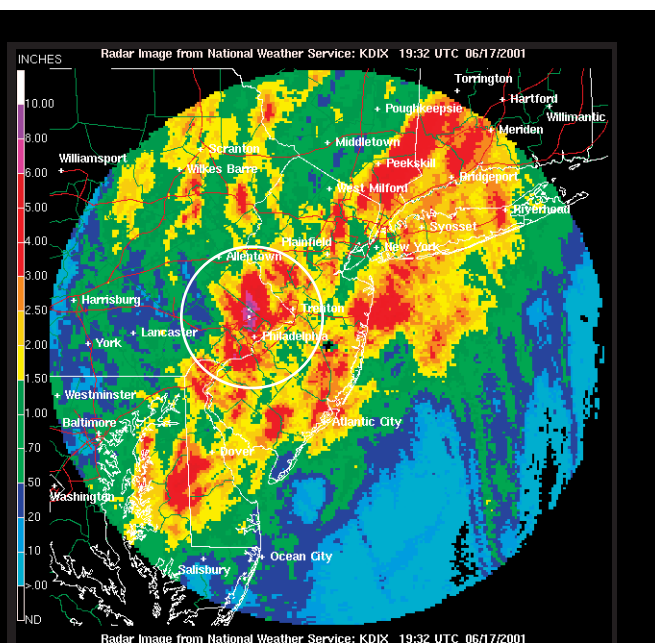
warning, provided by the National Weather Service through a partnership with public and private organizations, is a real, everyday need.

In order to boost public awareness of flooding potential, improve coordination among various agencies, and increase funding levels for much-needed programs, the commission formed a Flood Advisory Committee in March of 2000.

The committee provides a forum for coordination of flood-related activities and efficient use of technical and financial resources for the benefit of the basin community. It forwards recommendations to the commission for submission to organizations with flood preparedness and flood loss reduction responsibilities. The committee recently guided the DRBC staff in the development of a set of flood warning recommendations for the basin. They are included in a May 2001 report, which was updated a year later. This report, along with extensive flood-related information, can be found at http://www.nj.gov/drbc/Flood_Website/floodinf.htm.



Horsham, Pa., June 20, 2001. On Olive Street, a large hole was blown in Richard Barrajo's home from Tropical Storm Allison. His son Joe volunteered to go in and remove belongings from the basement. Photo by Liz Roll/FEMA News Photo.



Radar Image on June 17, 2001, during Tropical Storm Allison. Courtesy of the National Weather Service.